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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast - BLOCK QUOTES ONLY

Block Quotes:

I: "Bibi's Dilemma"
Shimon Shiffer, senior diplomatic correspondent wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yedioth Ahronot (6/12): "Among the prime minister's close aides, there is a clash between two schools of thought regarding the speech. One approach says to Netanyahu: "Don't be pressured, go with your worldview all the way, and in the

end even your rivals will appreciate your staying power. You are against the mad idea of two states for two peoples, you will not freeze construction in the settlements-so say it." Others say to Netanyahu: "What do you care if you say that you accept the road map outline, which includes the two-state idea? Utter these magic words, and then you can continue to do what your predecessors in the post of prime minister did-they did not stop building in the territories for a single moment." Moreover, senior government officials are whispering to Netanyahu that the Arab side and the Palestinians will reject any idea of a withdrawal from the territories in any case. "Let the Arab screw up the initiative of Obama, who naively thinks that he can bring peace to the bloody Middle East." Netanyahu is not forgetting the day after the speech. On the day after, the Americans will demand that he immediately stop all construction activity in the settlements, continue to remove roadblocks in the West Bank, and open the crossings to the Gaza Strip."

II. "Lieberman on the Left, Begin on the Right"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (6/12): "The criterion that currently slices the coalition into two is the question of whether Netanyahu should say 'two states' in his speech on Sunday. Say it, Lieberman and Barak tell him. Absolutely not, say Benny Begin and Bugi Yaalon.... 'These are only words,' Netanyahu said when asked, after his meeting with the US president, what his opinion was of two states for two peoples. Perhaps I misinterpret him, but it seems to me that Netanyahu is troubled by something much more significant than words. He knows that as soon as negotiations are launched, an unholy commotion will arise within the Likud. The question will not be what you gave up, but what you discussed.... Netanyahu would be glad to hold courtesy meetings with Abu Mazen. But as soon as negotiations are announced, the questions will start, the protests will start, the leaks, the resignations.... Netanyahu doesn't want negotiations. Not because there will be give and take, but because of Benny Begin."

III. "The songs of Songs, from B. to B."

Senior columnist Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (6/12): "Barak and Bibi, who might be enemies in the next prime ministerial contest, are on good terms today. ... Barak is convinced that the goal should be a comprehensive regional agreement, even though Israel is the exceptional, isolated entity in this part of the world, compared to Iran, for example. Without explicitly saying so, perhaps Bibi is also beginning to part ways with 'the dream of the Greater Land of Israel.'... Barak is convinced that Israel must say 'yes, but' rather than a contrarian 'no.' Israel cannot let itself be perceived as responsible for failure and lack of progress; it must enable Obama to try to move forward on the basis of the road map as it was constituted when it was introduced. 'The moment the major issues are at the center of the map, the settlements will also be given their proper dimensions.'... After all, would there really be two states for two peoples if we just stopped expanding the settlements? Even the Palestinians do not claim this. Mere words will not transform the Middle East into North America. Thus Israel is required to have both feet on the ground and not deviate from the task of honoring America's involvement.... If Bibi's speech, otherwise known as the government's position, does not move toward the Obama initiative, and Barak and Bibi continue to sing each other's praises rather than meeting the U.S. president halfway, then Sunday will start the countdown to the fall of this government."

IV. "Between Barack and a hard place"

Op-ed writer Gil Hoffman wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (6/12): "It is now up to Netanyahu to ensure that American-Israeli relations stop hemorrhaging, and that's what he will try to do on Sunday. But it won't be easy doing that while remaining loyal to his coalition partners, the anti-Palestinian-state majority in his Likud faction and, most importantly, to himself.... Chances are that... both the American administration and the Israeli coalition are going to have to take a step back and allow Netanyahu to outline a vision somewhere in between. As one political observer said this week: 'It's not easy being a prime minister of Israel, especially when you are caught

between Barack and a hard place."

12. "Iranian Elections"

1I. "Behind the Mask"

Ben Caspit, senior diplomatic correspondent, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (6/12): "If Ahmadinejad is defeated, we will miss him. There is no one who will serve Israel's PR interests better than him. The Holocaust denial campaign, the constant declarations about the need to wipe Israel off the map, the belligerence and bearded madness that he exuded during his term of office, helped illustrate the potential danger of the Iranian nuclear program

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better than a thousand service advertisements or a million speeches. Now, imagine that Mir-Hossein Mousavi should win. A sticky PR campaign will immediately ensue, in which Mousavi will be photographed kissing innocent Persian children in Tehran, canceling a few restrictions of the modesty patrol, speaking in favor of equal rights for women, and then saying, on a visit to Switzerland (where else), that Holocaust denial is a crime and that Iran has no problem with Israel... . Here, the Europeans will say, the Iranians are changing. They aren't so extreme any more. Winds of progress are blowing in Tehran, there is no cause to be excited by the nuclear program, things will be okay. But they will not be okay. The Iranian nuclear project started back in the days when the same Mousavi served as prime minister in Tehran. He was the one who gave authorization to buy the first centrifuges from the Pakistani scientist Khan. His reformist mask obscures the fact that the person who controls Iran is Ali Khamenei, and behind him stands an army of ayatollahs who are backed by the Revolutionary Guard. All these need, more than anything, a bit of quiet, in order to complete the nuclear project as quickly as possible, before the world really wakes up.... His victory next week, in the second round, will make the battle for blocking the Iranian nuclear program much more difficult and challenging."

II. "Does Iran's vote matter?"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (6/12): "What if Obama's softer tone encourages Iranian voters to walk away from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on the grounds that his braying has become superfluous and the American "threat" has diminished? And wouldn't our region be a better place if the demagogic Ahmadinejad was replaced by the reformist Mir Hossein Mousavi? Perhaps, but likely not.... All too helpfully for the mullahs, an Ahmadinejad defeat would distance the regime from the odious Holocaust denier. A Mousavi victory would provide it with a human face, making it even less likely that the P5-plus-one would stop the mullahs from building a bomb."

CUNNINGHAM